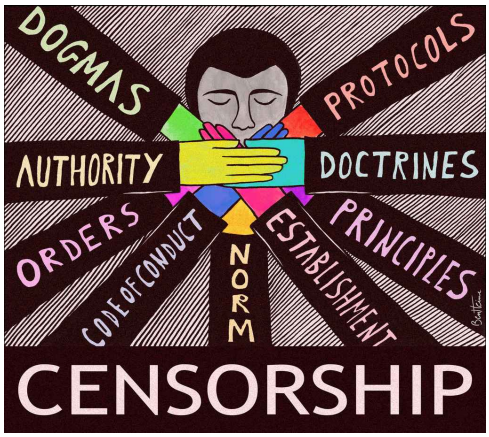
Hold Your Peace No Longer!

> **Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**
> **Acts 18:9-10 (KJV)**



The word 'peace' appears some 400 times in scripture, but is not always used to mean the same thing. In the above passage we witness God exhorting Paul to speak (hold not thy peace), or to no longer remain silent. But at the same time God is also telling Paul not to be afraid of those who may seek to hurt him, but to have peace in his spirit (no fear). Fear is the opposite of peace.

> **Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
> **2 Thessalonians 1:2 (KJV)**

God wants us all to have His peace in our spirits, yet at the same time we are not to hold our peace, but speak out.

> **What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.**
> **Matthew 10:27 (KJV)**

Indeed, what we hear in the ear are words from the Holy Spirit within us. And it is our duty as Christians to share them without fear of the consequences.

> **Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.**
> **Matthew 10:34 (KJV)**

The things the Spirit tells us rends our hearts, and the hearts of those that hear them (**Joel 2:13 KJV**). That is the sword of the Spirit at work, convicting us of sin. Oh yes, many a false prophet will tell you the Holy Spirit doesn't convict believers of sin, and in doing so makes a liar out of Paul and Christ Himself. Look at this.

> **The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**
> **Luke 18:11-14 (KJV)**

The publican was justified before God specifically because he was able to sense his inherent sinful nature while the Pharisee could not. It never leaves us, but we can keep it under subjection. And of course I must again refer to Paul's realization of his wretchedness (**Romans 7:24 KJV**). Tattoo this inside your eyelids; The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of our sin natures! Not to make us feel bad, though it does bring about a certain Godly meekness of spirit, but to call us to repentance.
But we would rather forget that we are sinners, wouldn't we? Poof! I got saved, no more sin nature? Sorry, that isn't how it works. This is where those of us who like Paul have been emboldened to preach righteousness offend others. Indeed, the Holy Spirit offends our ability to live in peace with our sins. But we are prone to sweep them under the rug and make believe they aren't there.

> **There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**
> **Romans 8:1 (KJV)**

No condemnation doesn't mean no sin! It means that our sins have not been imputed to us, but have been forgiven. Notice this statement is qualified as to only apply to those 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'. The Pharisee walked after the flesh, but the publican didn't. People love snappy sayings about walking in victory against sin. But if we want to walk in that victory we must confess them whenever we are convicted by the Holy Spirit. Oh, the Holy Spirit doesn't convict you of sin? Then you aren't saved! Yes, Satan can try to use our sins to discourage us, but only if we don't confess and repent of them. Why can't he use them against us? Because there is no condemnation for us who are in Christ! Glory to God!

> **And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.**
> **Matthew 24:10 (KJV)**

Yes, our sins are offensive and we hate being reminded of them. Jesus very presence around the Pharisees convicted them, but instead of repenting of them they killed Him in a desperate attempt to stop the condemnation.

> **And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.**
> **Joel 2:13 (KJV)**

Of course we don't offend people by going around telling them their mamas wear army boots or something. The gospel is an offense to our flesh which is why we must choose to operate in the Spirit. The point of all the conviction and offending is to rend our hardened hearts and cause us to repent. It is only when we refuse to repent that Satan can use our sins against us.

> **And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.**
> **Luke 19:37-40 (KJV)**

If we were to keep our peace the stones would cry out! Imagine that for a second. So we must forge ahead, and warn those who don't want to be warned. Why? Because they will have no excuse before God. When they say they didn't know they were offending Him we will be called to make testimony that we warned them. **Ezekiel 3:20 (KJV)** plainly tells us that if we fail to warn them their blood will be upon our heads.